

# THE TYNDALE SOCIETY

# Journal

No. 5

October 1996

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### **The Tyndale Society**

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## **EDITORIAL**

In my last editorial I looked forward to the second Oxford conference and its companion conference at Leuven and I am certain that I echo the sentiments of all who attended in saying that they more than surpassed expectations. The papers and discussions were of a uniformly high standard and it would be invidious to single any out for particular comment. This was the first conference since the founding of the Tyndale Society and there was a perceptible sense of belonging and commitment, from speakers and delegates alike. The success and smooth running of both conferences was the result of the hard work of many, but special thanks are due to Professor David Daniell, Dr Guido Latré and Mrs Priscilla Frost for their untiring efforts.

As I stated at the conference, this Journal belongs to and is created by the members of the Society, and I look forward to receiving the contributions of those who have perhaps been inspired by the conference to put pen to paper. I am hoping that the next Journal will be, at least in part, a conference-generated edition.

The present debate about the Monarchy and its role within the Church of England is raising issues which highlight the legacy of Tyndale and the Reformation in this country. The Tyndale Society has an important role to play in raising awareness and disseminating information which may go some way to mitigating the media's obsession with the more sensational stories which deflect attention from the Good News which Tyndale lived and died to make accessible to all.

*Hilary Day*

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## Letters to the Editor

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September 1996

Dear Hilary,

Back from the Second Oxford International Tyndale Conference I find myself in a very different mood. I arrived somewhat overawed by the prospect of rubbing shoulders with Professor This and Doctor That who had been but names in the Journal to me, and by the prospect of listening to lectures and papers high over my head, like the stars in the heavens, able to recognise but one or two constellations and struggling to navigate by them.

The reality has been very different. The depth and height of scholarship were there but gone was the *furia theologica* I had feared. In its stead was the breadth of a friendly fellowship and the humour of a friendly society where I felt welcomed, controversy was conducted with courtesy and there was laughter. I was able to relax and enjoy myself. Home again my wife says I am a changed man, kinder and more considerate. I don't know about this, but she says so.

The atmosphere of the conference was wonderful from the opening Service in the Chapel and the magnificent address by Rev. Michael Chantry, Chaplain of Hertford College, to the final farewell and the departure of so many (how I envied them!) on the coach to Le Tunnel and Leuven.

Michael Chantry's address challenged us all to follow in the footsteps of William Tyndale and stand firmly in them to speak out for the truth, whether in school or college or in the world at large. So what was William Tyndale's motivation that drove him to face that frightful death, and to face it with faith undimmed and with the prayer 'God, open the King of England's eyes'?

I believe that Tyndale's motivation was love of the Gospel and love of his country and that his target was the whole nation, from the boy that driveth the plow to the king himself; and he gave us the language of Shakespeare as a bonus. Our Society must have no less a target. May we use our expertise to reach out, first through the Universities and then to the ordinary man and woman everywhere until we are once more, what once we were, a Christian nation.

Yours sincerely,

*Ian M. Sciortino*

*[Ian Sciortino's report on the Oxford conference and that by Dr Eunice Burton on Leuven will be printed in the next edition of the Journal]*

August 1996

Dear Sir,

Two years ago, in 1994, a group of friends and I produced a play about the Life and Work of William Tyndale, which we called 'Signed in Fire'. We performed it as part of 'Tyndale 500' a week's festival in Barnet during August, and again in Oxford in February 1995, at St. John's College Theatre.

Here is a copy of the words of the theme song written for 'Signed in Fire' by Andrew De Witt.

### **It's Not Just History**

- 1) Where will you run to, in the aftermath  
Nowhere to hide from their schemes  
When the swords and the fire of the powerful  
Would scatter all your dreams

*Chorus:*      *It's not just history*  
*The dusty page will turn*  
*It's not just history*  
*The people will soon learn*  
*It's not just history*

- 2) You opened the eyes of the common man  
Who no more in darkness stands -  
Hearing the lies of the learned  
Hearing the word secondhand
- 3) Dreaming of a different age  
When all men shall read and know  
You stand condemned
- 4) Now the world has turned in a different way  
And the words you wrote sound strange,  
But the truth of the hope is alive today  
And it calls us all to change.

© Copyright K.A. De Witt *It's Not Just History* for Tyndale 500, 1994.

A tape of the arrangement is available on request from: Margaret Green  
90 Woodville Road  
NEW BARNET EN5 5NJ

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## Bible Smuggling During the Cold War

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For those too young to have lived through the era, it must be impossible to imagine what it was like to live during the years of the Cold War. The Super Powers of East and West faced each other across an ideological divide that threatened on many occasions to plunge the world into the nightmare of a nuclear holocaust. And each year saw the development of ever more powerful and sophisticated weapons of mass destruction. Worse than the wars that were being fought in various places, were the rumours of wars to come, the most frightening spectre being that of the sudden mobilisation of Russia's armies across an ill defended Europe in an avowed attempt to bring the entire continent under the Soviet umbrella. For many it was a daily expectation.

To us in the free West, the Communist Bloc loomed large as the oppressor of all freedoms, and not without reason. There were many a little older than I who remembered the mass killings under Stalin before, during, and even after the Second World War. And constantly filtering through were confirmed stories of the persecution and systematic annihilation of the Christian Church under a pitiless atheistic regime. The Bible was banned, and it could mean dispossession, imprisonment, torture and even death merely to possess a copy. The names of some of those who suffered in this persecution, Richard Wurmbrand, Haralan and Ladin Popov, and many others, filtered through the network across Europe to a sometimes incredulous audience.

Ironically news was also filtering through that the Christian Church in Russia was growing rapidly in spite of this horrendous persecution at the very same time that the Church seemed to be dying on its feet in the West. Material luxuries and Liberal Theology were taking their toll in a way that the Communist persecutors of the faith could only dream of. And it was in such an atmosphere that one day a married couple, accompanied by an unnamed pastor, turned up at a small informal house meeting of our church. They introduced themselves under pseudonyms, and when they began to tell us of their work it was clear why this was necessary. They were Bible smugglers. Their work was to carry copies of the Bible across the borders of Russia and her satellite states, Romania, Bulgaria, and so on, posing as tourists, and distribute them to a secret network of couriers, who in turn took them round to various underground cells of believers. They told a harrowing tale.

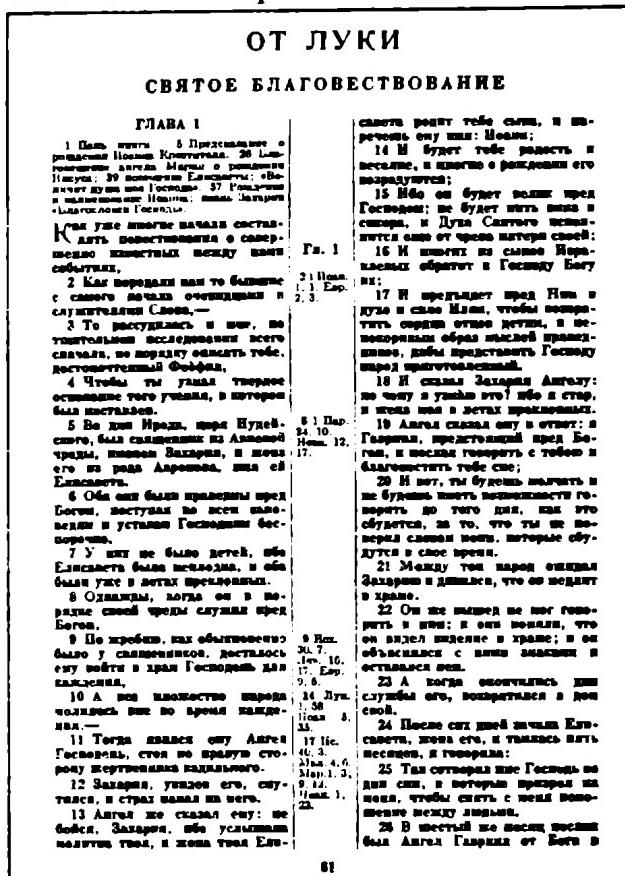
Their work at one stage carried them over the Bulgarian border, which they successfully crossed with a Land Rover crammed full of Bibles and vital funds for those persecuted families in need. The next week or so was spent in contacting a veritable army of waiting couriers, each drop being successfully accomplished. But inevitably news reached the ears of the local authorities of what they were up to, and it was whilst they were trying to leave the country that one of their more heart-stopping moments occurred. At the border post they were ordered, under threat of gunfire, to leave their vehicle. The guards marched them about twenty yards away, and from there they witnessed the systematic dismantling of the Land Rover.

The uniformed officers, perhaps police or customs staff who were highly trained in such work, were very thorough, and it was while they were about their work that the husband of the team realised with horror that he had left his document case between the front seats of the vehicle. That case contained all the names and addresses of his contacts and other underground workers. The officer in charge, as if reading his thoughts, reached in through the driver's door and retrieved the case. He looked at it long and thoughtfully and glanced repeatedly at its owner. He then drew near with it and stared deep into the hapless man's eyes. He continued to stare for a very long time, looking, it was supposed, for an expression of fear or alarm that would betray the man's guilt. The man met his stare and held it for the entire length of time that it took for the vehicle to be dismantled. Then, after what must have seemed an eternity, a subordinate officer approached and murmured to the officer in charge that the search was completed and the vehicle was clean of any contraband. Then the officer in charge smiled and simply handed back the document case, without having opened it, to its owner. He then ordered that the vehicle be made good and the now mystified couple were sent on their way.

Their feelings are better imagined than described, and they left that border post with the unshakeable conviction that they had witnessed a miracle. The names in that document case would have led the authorities to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of members of an underground church that the state was desperate to eliminate. It is possible, of course, that the officer who retrieved the case knew perfectly well what was inside, but was himself a secret Christian. There were many such in the Communist states who managed to work their way into positions of some importance, and were consequently a help in warning those about to be arrested, or in sabotaging investigations and intelligence gathering. Who knows? But the couple's emotions as they recounted their exploits, convinced each of us who listened that there was

much to do and a great work to accomplish if only somehow the Bible could be safely smuggled to waiting believers. Happily, the problem of just how this could be achieved had already been worked out, and my wife and I soon found ourselves recruited into something that we had never before dreamed of.

The task to which we had been recruited was simplicity itself. We were to face none of the perils under which the organisation's frontline workers



самого ровно тебе сына, и избранный им именем: Иоанн;

14 И будет тебе радость и веселье, и излияние в радости его возрадует;

15 Идео же будет велико пред Господом; и не будет иного имени и сокровища, и Духа Святого называемого именем от пророка имени святой;

16 И пишут на смиренной Епархии обратят к Господу Богу;

17 И представят пред Ним в ходе и смиренном Иаковом, чтобы оправдати отеческим детям, и изменившим образ милосердия проповедника, дабы представить Господу Богу проповедника;

18 И скажут Захарии Ангелу: по имену и званию твоему истины;

19 Ангел скажет ему в ответ: я Гавриил, представитель пред Богом, и послан говорить с тобою и благовестить тебе сие;

20 И пот, ты будешь испарять и не будешь иметь возможности горячести до того дня, как это обдумаешь, за то, что ты из первых склонил ноги искривленные в храме;

21 Между тем паром склоняется Захария и дышит, что он подходит в храм.

22 Он же паром не мог говорить в иниции; и они поняли, что он видел видение в храме; и он объяснялся с именем Захарии и оставлялся иниции.

23 А когда окончательно дали склоняется, возвращаться в дом.

24 Помимо смиренной Епархии, хана его, и тяжело писать письмена, и говорили:

25 Так сотворил иже Господь во дни сих, в которые проповедал на земле, чтобы склонить с именем именем между людьми.

26 В шестый же день письма были Ангел Гавриил от Бога в

heavier than an ordinary two or three page letter. The illustration above is that of a rare surviving specimen that is now in the Tyndale Society's archives. It is actually the first seventeen chapters of Luke's gospel in Russian. It weighs hardly anything at all, and in its small envelope in the midst of a sackful of other mail it would (hopefully) pass unnoticed.

Our task was to address each envelope by hand. A type-written address would mean that the envelope would be automatically opened by the censor and the contents examined. We were forbidden for very sensible reasons to insert any additional enclosure, as, tempting though it might be, it would seriously affect the thickness and weight of the envelope, and would again put its contents, and more importantly its recipient, at serious risk. We were supplied with lists of names and addresses, and it was important that we

picked the names, the streets and the towns, at random and did not work down the list alphabetically. To do so might produce a pattern that the censor's office could pick up. The other important consideration was that we should never post more than one envelope a day, and that envelopes of the same colour and size should never be posted on consecutive days. This was again to avoid a pattern being noticed. My wife and I did add a precaution of our own to this, namely that of mailing each letter in a different postal district so as to vary the postmark on each envelope.

But there was one disconcerting task to be done, namely that of putting our own name and address on the back of each envelope. This was important as, again, the envelope which lacked such an apparatus would automatically be placed to one side by the censor for examination. All kinds of spectres arose in our minds of our names being filed away in some cabinet of the KGB for future reference should our country ever find itself under the Communist heel - not such an unlikely prospect in those days!

There was one factor, though, that was certainly on our side. I was serving as a Prison Officer at Wandsworth and then Ashford at the time, and one of my duties was to work in the censor's office. Because many of our prisoners were considered dangerous, we were required to read every outgoing and incoming letter and at Wandsworth we held nearly 1600 prisoners! Take it from me, when one has read so many predictably unsympathetic philosophical observations upon the judiciary of this country, mixed with inanities and a liberal sprinkling of obscenities, then one soon tires of the task, with the unhappy result that many letters went unread, only their passage to the outside world being recorded on endless reams of paper that nobody seemed to read. Knowing the excruciating boredom and impossibility of the censor's task was thus of great personal comfort to me. It was unlikely for this reason alone that many of the letters would be stopped.

One event that actually may have helped in this regard, although it caused some alarm at the time, was the national railway strike in Poland. Virtually all mail into Russia arrived via the Polish railways, and their prolonged strike meant that a veritable mountain of mail built up at the Russian border. Initially there was concern that this would produce inadvertent though recognisable patterns in the mail, a build up of similar sizes, shapes and colours of envelopes drawing the attention of some prying and zealous officer of the state. But it actually had the opposite effect of causing the censors to yield in the face of such an overwhelming and impossible workload. Thus, hardly any incoming mail to Russia was stopped or intercepted during this period.

Because of the secrecy involved, there was often very little feedback concerning the effect, or even the safe arrival, of these gospels. We often wondered what became of them, or their recipients. Predictably some would be destroyed on arrival, their recipients knowing full well what became of those who were caught with such subversive literature. Others, we later discovered, were treasured by those who received them, and even dutifully copied out by hand for further distribution. It was the time of the Lollards all over again! Others would recognise the commercial value of such banned items, and would sell them for inflated prices to those whom they knew would be willing to have them. In one or two cases, we heard that this was sometimes followed up by the betrayal and arrest of the purchasers by those who were happy to take their money before claiming a reward from the state for their betrayal. But whatever became of some, we knew that most of these Bible-portions found their way to those who needed them. What their final impact was is a subject on which the history books have yet to be written.

I have avoided naming the organisation that carried out this work. It seems, in fact, to have been disbanded. But my caution in not publicly naming it is simply that some of its members might then be traced, and it is possible that they are still involved in such work in spite of the recent collapse of the Soviet. Moreover, lest it should seem that I am being melodramatic, it may also happen, and indeed seems likely, that the Russian people themselves will shortly elect the Communists back into power, and who knows what scores might then be settled? It is safest, I think, to let them remain behind their cloak of anonymity. Meanwhile we may ponder how things were before the Reformation of our own country, when Tyndale's New Testaments were smuggled into England from the Continent. Or even before, when portions of Wycliffe's (and other?) translations of the Bible were smuggled around the country under the very noses of a persecuting authority. Such work changed the course of history more effectively than any army. Perhaps the same thing happened in Russia? We like to think it did.

*W R Cooper*

#### POSTSCRIPT

It may be that one or two readers were themselves involved in this or similar work. If that is the case, would they consider donating any surviving literature or Bible-portions that they may have to The Tyndale Society, where they will form the basis of a collection of such material? Such a collection would be of great value to future researchers.

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## John Wesley's New Testament

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John Wesley, the great preacher, teacher, evangelist and founder of Methodism, is not generally known for his revision of the New Testament, which has been somewhat neglected, yet his work is still in print (see below) 240 years since its first publication in 1755. (Some authorities quote 1768 but as Wesley's Preface is dated January 4 1754, the earlier date is most likely. The later date probably relates to a subsequent edition.) Originally entitled *The New Testament with Notes, for Plain, Unlettered Men who know only their Mother Tongue*, it is basically a revision of the Authorised (King James) Version (AV).

As indicated by the title, Wesley's aim was very similar to that of Tyndale's translation, i.e. to make the New Testament comprehensible to the ordinary man of the time. After 140 years since the first publication of the AV the language had become archaic and Wesley's intention was to address this situation. The Notes were intended to supplement the text, providing a commentary which would make the scriptures clearer to the ordinary person. Wesley explains his approach in the Preface and it is worth quoting most of paragraph 4 of this Preface:

‘... I design, first, to set down the text itself, for the most part, in the common English translation, which is, in general, so far as I can judge, abundantly the best that I have seen. Yet I do not say it is incapable of being brought, in several places, nearer to the original. Neither will I affirm that the Greek copies from which this translation was made are always the most correct; and therefore I shall take the liberty, as occasion may require, to make here and there a small alteration.’

He adds that he aimed to preserve ‘what we have long been accustomed to and to love, the very words by which God has often conveyed strength or comfort to our souls.’

Having carefully studied a Greek text, Wesley made some 12,000 alterations to the AV in all but, as he says,:

‘... I have never knowingly, so much as in one place, altered it for altering’s sake; but there only, where, first, the sense was made better, stronger, clearer or more consistent with the context; secondly, where the sense being equally good, the phrase was better or nearer the original.’

Most of the changes are comparatively minor and are, in part, due to Wesley's use of a different Greek text. The following extracts, taken at random, give some idea of the nature and extent of these changes. The words underlined are Wesley's alterations or additions, with the replaced AV words enclosed in square brackets [ ]:

#### **Matthew 5:17-18**

Think not that I am come to destroy the law [,] and [or] the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all things be effected [fulfilled].

#### **Mark 8:14-16**

Now they [the disciples] had forgotten to take bread, nor [neither] had they in the vessel [ship] with them any more than one loaf. And he charged them, Take heed, [saying] beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and [of] the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, [it is because] We have no bread.

#### **Acts 21:11**

And coming to us [when he was come unto us], he took up Paul's girdle, and binding [bound] his own feet and hands [hands and feet and] said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man whose girdle this is [that owneth this girdle], and [shall] deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

#### **Romans 9:25-26**

As he saith also in Hosea [Osee], I will call them my people, who [which] were not my people; and her beloved, who [which] was not beloved. And it shall come to pass, [that] in the place where it was said to [unto] them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the sons [children] of the living God.

It will be seen that although the alterations are many, they rarely alter the sense to any appreciable degree and some seem pointless, for example why should Wesley substitute 'vessel' for 'ship' in Mark 8, quoted above? In *Ancient & English Versions of the Bible* (Ed. H. Wheeler Robinson, Oxford 1940) J. Isaacs describes the result as 'An important but neglected revision midway between familiarity and stiffness, ...'.

As far as the Notes are concerned, Wesley again says he has avoided 'methods of reasoning and modes of expression as people in common life are unacquainted with'. He acknowledges that he has freely used the work of others, notably Bengelius (i.e. Johann Albrecht Bengel), an early critic of variant readings of New Testament Greek. Bengel had, in 1734, printed a Greek New Testament (his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*) which included marginal notes on the text. Wesley apparently translated this work (or portions of it) and many of his Notes are taken from it.

The text of the New Testament reverted to Tyndale's arrangement by being divided into paragraphs but with verse numbers down the left hand side. This text is printed at the upper part of each page with the relevant Notes beneath it in smaller type. Most verses have their own individual Note but where this is not so, the Note to the previous verse/s covers the following verse/s. The whole provides a comprehensive commentary.

Each gospel, epistle, etc., is preceded by a brief introduction (except Luke, where the same function is served by an expanded note on the first four verses of Chapter 1), the greater part of which is taken up with a list of contents, including page numbers. There are also footnotes giving references to related passages in both the Old and New Testaments.

The introduction to Romans is, like Tyndale's Prologue, rather longer than most but it must be said that much of this relates to the epistles generally. The introduction to Revelations is also relatively long but omits the table of contents. Some of the Notes to Revelations are lengthy and the book also concludes with 'a short view of the whole contents of this book'.

At the end of the whole volume there is 'An Index, Chiefly of Words Explained in the Preceding Comment'.

Wesley's work has, over many decades, been an influence, especially on Wesleyans and on Methodist lay preachers in particular, although I suspect its main value, particularly in more recent times, has been in the Notes rather than the revision of the New Testament. The current, paperback edition runs to 1054 pages and is published by the Epworth Press under the title *Explanatory Notes Upon The New Testament*. It can be obtained from the Methodist Publishing House, 20 Ivatt Way, Peterborough PE3 7PG, England, price £7.50 plus £1.15 per copy postage and packing to UK addresses (extra overseas). Quote reference ED164 and ISBN 0-7162-0368-5. Payment must be in sterling, cheques made payable to 'Methodist Publishing House'. Access and VISA credit cards are accepted. (Telephone 01733 332201, Fax 01733 331201).

*Colin Wolse*

### PART 2: THE CELESTIAL BALLET

Writing on the history of science in 1953 Alfred North Whitehead remarked that 'In the year 1500 Europe knew less than Archimedes who died in the year 212 BC.'<sup>[1]</sup> What, then, caused and enabled Copernicus to turn the scientific world on its head? It is necessary to see what Copernicus inherited and what he contributed.

Briefly, his intellectual inheritance included: Aristotle's scientific world-view surviving more-or-less in its original form and also in degraded mystical forms (Dionysius the Areopagite); observations based on Ptolemy's tables were continuing to throw up anomalies (Peuerbach and Regiomontanus); a critical tradition which sought a fuller and better understanding of the Revelation which had been developed within the Church (William of Auvergne, Buridan, Oresme); and, a new approach to knowledge had been developed which can best be described as 'aesthetic economy' (William of Ockham)<sup>[2]</sup>.

In cosmology<sup>[3]</sup> Whitehead's assertion is certainly a seductive point of view, but does not allow for the Arabic<sup>[4]</sup> and medieval developments in far-ranging detail which when brought together after 1500 provided the springboard for Kepler, Galilei and Newton. What is supportable is that Copernicus may be considered to have retrieved the situation regarding the place of the Sun at the centre of the universe which had been put forward by Aristarchus (c310–c230 BC)<sup>[5]</sup>.

### GREEK AND ARABIC SCIENCE

An earlier system proposed by Heraclides (c390–c310 BC, and a pupil of Plato) was that Venus and Mercury rotated around the Sun, which in turn circled the earth; and that the Earth turned on its axis<sup>[6]</sup>. The system of Aristarchus was fully in favour of a central Sun and as a necessary consequence the Earth rotated on its axis thereby providing diurnal motion. These two motions of the earth - annual and daily - obviously (today) go together, but such was not thought to be essential in earlier times when even one motion of the earth ran counter to the prevailing world-picture. It seems that the Greeks were not immune to religious persecution for Plutarchus

(c331–c232 BC) stirred up a popular campaign against Aristarchus accusing him of sacrilege for ‘displacing the Hearth of the world’<sup>[7]</sup>.

These Greek systems were never in the mainstream which was dominated by the Pythagorean/Platonic system, dating from the 6th to the 4th centuries BC, with the Earth a stationary globe at the centre of a swirling universe of homocentric spheres. This was encapsulated in the cosmology of Aristotle (4th century BC) and supported by the mathematical interpretations of observations by Ptolemy (AD c100–c168) who in turn had developed his work from that of Hipparchus (c190–c120 BC).

Whilst the Romans are perceived as taking over the Greek empire, this is a western or Mediterranean view. The Romans expanded into a relatively empty and scientifically primitive western Europe. But from an eastern aspect Greek, along with other cultures, actively survived in continuance of the fragmentary network grown out of the empire of Alexander (356–323 BC) in the Near and Middle East: survived and developed.

The Hindu and Persian peoples particularly made highly significant contributions to scientific thinking which were grafted by the Arabs onto the Greek tree of knowledge. Baghdad, Byzantium (Constantinople after AD 330) and Alexandria were cultural capitals unmatched by Rome and they prospered as Arab centres despite the intrusion of the Roman military into their affairs.

Apparently without exception, the Arabic astronomers (pre- and post-Islamic) retained the geocentric concept without question and for similar (that is, theological) reasons to the Greeks. Additional reinforcement was provided by the account of the ‘nocturnal ascent’ of the Blessed Prophet (Muhammad, AD c570–c632) from Mecca to Jerusalem and then vertically through all the states of being to the Divine Throne itself, all of which is described (and thereby sanctified) in the Holy Book of Islam – the Quran. The journey of the Prophet Muhammad is at once a return to the Source and a delineation of the cosmos which became fundamentally embedded in Islamic thought by the descent of the Holy Quran<sup>[8]</sup>. The literally explicit Revelation to Muhammad of the cosmos was totally binding on Muslims and brooked no challenge, being the direct word of God to man. But Islam also encouraged the intellectual exploration of the Revelation, and perhaps being unaware of the potential for conflict of ideas and fully confident in their beliefs, the seeds of the limitations of Islamic science were already sown from the very start. This wedge was fortified by the incorporation within Arabic culture – but not within Islam – of highly influential Jews, Persians,

Syrians, Armenians and other peoples of the Near East who served or existed within the Islamic empire.

Whilst the Muslims (that is, after the early 7th century AD) were completely of the geocentric persuasion this must not overshadow their extensive and positive contributions to astronomy (and science and technology more generally also). It is not possible here to expand on this but it is appropriate to mention that in their need to know the *qibla*, where Mecca was located relative to their personal position on the planet (and many were nomads), much astronomical work was induced and put to practical use. Furthermore, biblical chronology and the fixing the dates for religious festivals also stimulated astronomical investigations – just as they did in Christian Europe. If for no other reason Christians, from Bede (AD 673–735) onwards, in their search for more and better information looked to Arab sources in science – and cosmology in particular.

In AD 641 the library at Alexandria was sacked with immeasurable loss of manuscripts. The surviving scholars went to Baghdad and Constantinople in the main, where such knowledge was valued. When the Islamic empire spread over north Africa and crossed into Spain in AD 710 the scholars were not long in following and brought with them texts in Greek and Hindu, and other languages of the Near and Middle East. By the ninth century science was flourishing in Arabic Spain, the most important centre being Toledo where most of the ancient texts were translated into Arabic, including the works of Aristotle and Ptolemy. By about 1050 all the significant scientific works of the Hellenistic period were available in Arabic<sup>[9]</sup>.

Following the fall of Toledo to the Vikings in 1085, access to this established and astonishing centre of translation and extensive archives was provided to scholars who had been alerted to its growing presence in about 1000 by Gerbert of Aurillac (c930-1003, the later Pope Sylvester II). Between about 1125 and 1280 virtually all these manuscripts were translated into Latin by European scholars who visited and worked in Toledo initially and later elsewhere. The work of Gerard of Cremona (1114–87) who translated from Arabic to Latin, and William of Moerbeke (c1215–c1286) from Greek to Latin alone would have sufficed to transform western science and natural philosophy<sup>[10]</sup>. But the works of neither Aristotle nor Ptolemy could be said to have been known directly north of the Pyrenees before about 1200; a date roughly coinciding with the founding of the universities (as distinct from the cathedral schools such as at Chartres) of Paris, Bologna, and Oxford.

The Caliphate of Cordoba continued in the southern half of Spain into the 1200s when successive wars during that century against the Moors, together with the Christian hostility towards Islam expressed in the crusades (1096–1270), had the effect of shifting the centre of Arabic science back to the lands of eastern Mediterranean. Astronomical work progressed in several newly conceived observatories, notably at Isfahan (11th century), Maraghah (13th century), and Samarkand (founded 1420). The location of these renowned observatories unparalleled in western Europe until the time of Tycho Brahe (1546–1601) should be noted as being within the ambit of Constantinople and the trade routes established by the Vikings to the Baltic by way of Kiev and the plains of central Europe. When the eastern Roman empire fell in 1453, dispersion of texts and scholars from Constantinople are usually thought of as being transferred directly to Italy; most no doubt were, but there remain the largely unresearched and possible (probable?) connections along the northern, inland trade routes<sup>[11]</sup>.

Without Islamic science and culture it is hard to envisage western Europe being capable of taking up Greek science and philosophy after the Dark Ages, for the inheritance from Rome was scientifically quite inadequate.

## ROMAN LITERATURE

The heliocentric theory did, however, survive in post-Roman Europe though not in a really scientific form, rather in commentaries or derivative texts from the Pythagorean/Platonic tradition. In the hands of the Neoplatonists the ideas were kept alive (barely) but without any scientific support. Chalcidius (early 4th century AD) translated Plato's *Timaeus* into Latin enabling the scholars of the early Middle Ages to become familiar with Plato's cosmology (geocentric) and with that of Heraclides (geo-heliocentric). Macrobius (c400 AD) and Martianus Capella (c470 AD) both mention the Heraclidean system but not by name. Other encyclopedic authors of the fourth to eighth centuries – Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville – did not expound on astronomical science though Bede explored calendrical matters possibly with influence from early Arabic sources.

The Neoplatonic 'school' was elaborated by the so-called pseudo-Dionysius (Dionysius the Areopagite, probably early sixth century AD) who exercised great influence on medieval thought by way of his treatises *On the Heavenly and Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*. Here he describes the upper reaches of the 'chain of being' with a fixed hierarchy of angels attached to the crystal spheres to keep them in motion: Seraphim turning the *Primum Mobile*; the Cherubim the sphere of the fixed stars; the Thrones the sphere

of Saturn; the Dominations, Virtues, and Powers the spheres of Jupiter, Mars, and the Sun; the Principalities and Archangels the spheres of Venus and Mercury; whilst the lower angels looked after the Moon. These upper rungs of the ‘ladder of nature’ were Platonic whilst the lower were Aristotelian, graduating on the principle of continuity through living things on Earth to inanimate objects<sup>[12]</sup>. Picturesque and fanciful, perhaps; but not without an enduring attraction.

## THE UNEASY ALLIANCE

The edicts against Aristotle’s commentators during the thirteenth century in Paris had two effects. The first was to clamp down on scientific research and the second to stimulate it. By setting out the banned propositions the issues were clarified and lent themselves to being treated coherently, whereas prior to this the problems were uncordinated and randomly spread among many authors’ works. Thus, those of a conservative nature went to ground whilst those of a more radical nature were prompted to enquire further, albeit cautiously, using primary source material rather than relying on the commentaries. The radical or critical tradition, if it can be so called<sup>[13]</sup>, began as soon as the scientific works of Aristotle began to be available in the Latin west around 1200. But the *prevailing* current of thought was in favour of the Aristotelian world-view in whatever form – scientific or mystical – it was all things to all men.

An early instigator of the radical tradition was William of Auvergne (c1180–1249), professor of philosophy at the University of Paris and bishop of Paris 1228–49. He aimed to integrate classical Greek and Arabic philosophy with Christian theology and in using non-Christian philosophy from the Arabs (mainly Ibn Sina, or Avicenna, the Persian philosopher and physician 980–1037) ran foul of a Church authority which at that time was driving the Moors out of Spain and warring with Islam in the crusades to the Holy Land (1096–1270). William of Auvergne helped to ‘banish’ angels from the Avicennian universe, preparing the way for a less theological interpretation of the cosmos<sup>[14]</sup>. But angels make good subjects for paintings and sculptures – a fact not lost on renaissance artists – and which may help to explain the persistence of angelology.

One of the most influential of the medieval philosopher-scientists was William of Ockham, the Oxford theologian; a Franciscan, he was firmly against the civil excesses of the papacy. He was in constant conflict with the papal authorities, being tried for heresy at Avignon and excommunicated in Bavaria (1328). His stricture that explanations should not be sought outside

of what can be known has affinities with later scientific thought and is a watershed in approaches to understanding the natural world<sup>[15]</sup>. William's trenchant attacks on Aristotelian philosophy and ideas concerning force and movement of bodies went largely unheeded in medieval times<sup>[16]</sup>. However his more general critique of Aristotelian science stimulated others, including Jean Buridan and Nicole Oresme – two outstanding Paris masters of mathematics and physics of the fourteenth century.

Jean Buridan (c1290–c1360) treated the question of diurnal rotation, followed even more convincingly by his former pupil Nicole Oresme (c1320–82). The vehicle for their thoughts was provided by the scholastic method of posing and commenting on questions on traditional texts – in this case Aristotle's *De Caelo*.

Linking terrestrial with celestial notions concerning movement of bodies (mechanics in present-day terms) Buridan recognized that the daily motion of the stellar sphere could be 'saved' by the assumption of a stationary heaven and a rotating Earth, or the reverse. He gives the example of a moving ship passing another at rest in the middle of the ocean. If the observer on the moving ship imagined himself at rest, the ship actually at rest would appear to be in motion. Likewise, if the sun were actually at rest and the Earth turned, the appearance to earth-bound eyes would be of the reverse. In strictly astronomical terms the phenomena could be 'saved' by either model, and mathematical astronomers who were solely concerned with celestial appearances could employ whichever suited best. But scholastic philosophers were caught up in religious dogma which approved of Aristotle's concept of the universe which included the principle that rest is a more 'noble state' than motion. Buridan proposed therefore that it would be more appropriate for the noblest sphere of fixed stars to be at rest and the most ignoble body, the Earth, to rotate. He further assumed that in 'saving the phenomena' the simplest means possible would be more desirable; thus if the fixed stars moved they would have to career around the heavens at an astounding speed whereas if the comparatively minuscule earth rotated the relative speed would be immeasurably less. So far, so good.

This argument was reiterated in its essentials by Oresme, Copernicus, and Galilei, but neither Buridan nor Oresme could shake off their cultural inheritance and chose the traditional and theologically acceptable notion of a stationary Earth.

The reason Buridan and Oresme adduced for this was that if an arrow were to be shot into the air vertically it falls to earth at the same spot from which it was loosed; according to his theory of impetus the arrow should fall

well to the west. The argument was that the arrow, the air, the Earth, and the observer all moved together due to the rotary motion of the whole system thereby concealing the circular path of the arrow. But Aristotle's concept of impetus did not allow this combination; for Buridan and Oresme, the impetus impressed upon the arrow should enable the arrow to resist the lateral motion of the air as it rotates in concert with the Earth. But experience showed that the arrow did in fact fall at the point of departure; therefore the conclusion must be that *the most probable solution* was that the Earth was at rest. This was reassuring as it fitted in with the prevailing theological interpretation of the revelation; thus, faith and reason were combined in harmony. All seemed well with the world.

It is characteristic of much of scholastic science that whilst the analysis can be seen to be sound the conclusions often seem irrational or fanciful due to the intervention of external considerations, or not strictly relevant criteria. In this case Buridan employed physics rather than astronomy to resolve the matter – but it also happened to fit in with the Church's approved views.

Whilst most of the ideas of Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus (1401–64) were swept up in the great upsurge of the seventeenth century, his insightful work in science was a stimulant to his successors. Often referred to as a precursor to Copernicus because of his non-geocentric views, his cosmology was a strange mixture of science and mysticism which led him to the conclusion that the 'the whole machine of the universe is a sphere which has its centre everywhere, but its circumference nowhere'. Oddly reminiscent of Hoyle's 'steady-state universe' of the mid-twentieth century.

But what of observational astronomy in western Europe after the Arab astronomers left Spain? Until the fifteenth century systematic observations were very rare, of negligible importance, and were not conducted in observatories as known to the Arabs<sup>[17]</sup>. Not until Georg von Peurbach (1423–61), court astrologer to Frederick III, Duke of Austria, followed by his pupil Johannes Müller (1436–76, known as Regiomontanus), also working in Vienna, were any serious contributions made to observational astronomy in western Europe. Although both died young their main, and considerable, achievements were in clarifying Ptolemy's system and demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that it was incompatible with empirical facts. Thus the technical ground was laid for Copernicus.

## NICHOLAS COPERNICUS

If any single contribution is to be thought most highly of in the work of Copernicus (1473–1543) it was that he stood back and looked coolly over

the available evidence and drew conclusions from it, stunning in their simplicity. The reason for including the lengthy preamble is that it is as nothing compared to the confusion and complexity that Copernicus had to deal with. From his *Revolutions* it is clear that he was fully informed of the scientific, mystical and theological literature; and with a clear mind set about disentangling myth from fact, fancy from hard evidence.

When the finished printed book arrived in Copernicus' hands tradition has it that it was as near a posthumous work as it could be, for Copernicus was on his deathbed. Although 1543 is the date of publication, the production of the *Revolutions* had been underway for many years. In the *Letter of Dedication* (presumably written 1541–42) he refers to having kept hidden the work for 'not merely nine years but already four times that period.' Thus, in 1533 his ideas were discussed at the papal court in a friendly atmosphere, partly under the patronage of Cardinal Nicholas Schönberg who had known Copernicus since 1518. Schönberg is first among the dedicatees, after Pope Paul III to whom the *Preface* is addressed<sup>[18]</sup>. In 1507–08 Copernicus had produced in manuscript what amounts to a first version of his astronomical thought. This work was the *Commentariolus* and it sets out his heliocentric theory in an undeveloped way; he provides the criticism of the existing world-views and outlines his proposals, but saves 'mathematical demonstrations, reserving these for my larger work.',<sup>[19]</sup>

Copernicus' duties as Canon at Frombork<sup>[20]</sup> in the service of the Church involved considerable work as administrator, lawyer and physician to the bishop. Until his death in 1512 the Bishop of Ermland was Copernicus' uncle, Lucas Waczenrode, and Copernicus served several subsequent bishops and chapters in this Catholic outpost surrounded by Protestant territory. Tiedemann Giese was a member of the chapter for over twenty years before he was made Bishop of Kulm; Giese was the second dedicatee. But it was not entirely weight of work which restrained Copernicus in completing and publishing the *Revolutions*.

Being of a modest disposition he was aware of the probability of being scorned by the ignorant, and pointed in his *Letter of Dedication* to the example of the Pythagoreans who did not publish their work for this reason. However, the main cause probably lies in that he felt that he had not altogether adequately proved the proposition other than by, or from, circumstantial evidence – but this, after all, is all there was. He required encouragement and/or persuasion to publish and this came from the twenty-five year old Protestant professor of mathematics, one Georg Joachim known as Rhaeticus from his place of birth, the Austrian Tyrol. Vienna was still

(after Peuerbach and Regiomontanus) virtually the only place in western Europe engaged in observational astronomy and a further connection is that Regiomontanus began the astronomical institute in Nuremberg during 1471–75. Philip Melancthon had selected Rhaeticus to be professor at the age of twenty-two at the recently founded University of Wittenberg, the hot-bed of Protestantism. Martin Luther, of course, was professor of Biblical Exegesis also at the small-town University of Wittenberg, from 1512 to 1546.

Rhaeticus arrived unannounced in Frombork in the spring of 1539 to seek-out Copernicus and obtain more and better particulars of the new astronomical system of which he had received reports. He brought with him several newly published scientific works which Copernicus did not possess though may have seen earlier. Immediately Rhaeticus set to work on the manuscript which Copernicus had already produced by that date. In 1540 Rhaeticus had published, with the consent of Copernicus the *First Account (Narratio prima)*, which was a resumé dealing solely with the motion of the Earth. Only at about this time, it appears, did Copernicus decide to publish his larger work, possibly encouraged by the reception of the *First Account*, and he asked Rhaeticus to see it through the press. When Rhaeticus left Frombork in the autumn of 1541 he took with him the complete, though unedited manuscript by Copernicus. The signs of haste in the manuscript are due to last minute completion or re-writing rather than of the complete writing in a short space of time<sup>[21]</sup>.

Printing by Johannes Petreius in Nuremberg was delayed until the spring of 1542, probably because of reservations expressed to Rhaeticus by Melancthon, and additionally by Rhaeticus taking on the demanding duties of dean at Wittenberg. Later that year Rhaeticus had to leave Nuremberg and Wittenberg for Leipzig where he had obtained another post as professor of mathematics; thus the business of supervising publication was left to a colleague. In this way Andreas Osiander, one of Luther's 'inner circle'<sup>[22]</sup>, became involved with the publication, though he had corresponded with Rhaeticus and Copernicus in 1540. His impact on the book was significant, for he appended an anonymous *Preface* which went entirely against what Copernicus had set out to achieve<sup>[23]</sup>.

Copernicus had bitten the bullet and put forward the heliocentric theory and all its implications as substantive fact. But Osiander considered that because an astronomer cannot 'attain to the true causes' he must 'conceive and devise the causes of [these] motions or hypotheses', and 'these hypotheses need not be true or even probable'. Nowhere did Copernicus

mention ‘hypothesis’ in connection with his own system, and his language is non-inflammatory in favour of heliocentrism. Maybe when Copernicus read the book on his deathbed it was this treachery that hurried him to his grave.

Osiander was correct, however, in that the evidence available to Copernicus was not sufficient in itself to completely overthrow the conventional system. And caution, he felt, would be prudent. Interestingly, though, it was not fear of the Catholic Church that prompted this action (for Copernicus’ work already had actual or tacit approval from that quarter), but the Protestant reaction. Osiander probably knew of Luther’s and Melancthon’s reservations concerning the proposed motion of the Earth which went counter to the biblical record. These qualms were nothing to do with the failure of the Aristotelian world-view, nor with the lack of consonance in the astronomical observations held together in the Ptolemaic tables; it was all to do with biblical exegesis, and this was Luther’s professional subject.

### THE REVOLUTIONS

The book comprises the letter from Schönberg to Copernicus urging publication, the *Letter of Dedication* to Pope Paul III, two *Prefaces* (one by Copernicus and the anonymous one), and the work itself in six ‘books’ or sections, each divided into chapters.

In his own *Preface*, Copernicus explains to the Pope the reasons for putting forward his ideas. The chief one is that Aristotle’s theory was vague and was not supported by observation or mathematical tables showing planetary movements; whereas Ptolemy’s theory based on his tables (even as brought up to date by Peuerbach and Regiomontanus) was internally contradictory and contravened the laws of physics. As two, clearly unsatisfactory, theories were already being entertained there could be no objection in indicating a third, superior system. The final reason was that the calendar needed reforming, about which Copernicus had been consulted by the papacy in 1514.

The contents may be briefly summarized:

**Book I:** a general statement about the centrality of the Sun with the Earth as a circulating planet, with an exposition of trigonometrical methods for calculating planetary orbits. Chapter 11 treats the ‘Proof of the earth’s triple motion’ - that is, the daily rotation, annual orbit, and yearly revolution in inclination (this last deals with the Earth’s ‘wobble’, or precession, over 26,000 years).

**Book II:** detailed application of trigonometrical methods to the movement of planets and stars.

**Books III, IV, V, and VI:** more of the same with special reference to the Earth, Moon and planets, respectively.

For a scientific theory to carry weight it must not only show up the errors or faults of earlier theories, but make proposals for new and better. In his critique, Copernicus refers to all the objections to Aristotle and Ptolemy provided by Buridan, Oresme and others (whom he names), but breaks free of their self-imposed constraints which led them back to the Revelation of God as an Aristotelian experience. He also mentions the explorers of Spain and Portugal destroying Ptolemy's geographical description of the world (for example, it was found that people did indeed live in the equatorial regions).

In support of his system, Copernicus calls upon earlier astronomers from ancient Greece – including Philolaus the Pythagorean, Heraclides, and Aristarchus. He mentions all the Roman literary contributions and includes Plutarch, Cicero, and Virgil, for good measure. He stays clear of any Arabic citations. But it would be too strong a conclusion to say that Copernicus was prompted by ancient astronomy towards his conclusions. The reading of his text suggests that whilst he is pleased to have found their support he had arrived at the same conclusions on the basis of the physical evidence he had to hand. Ancient Greek authorities obviously would carry great weight in the early days of the scholarly renaissance and it is natural that he should have brought them to line up with him against the:

'babblers who, although completely ignorant of mathematics, nevertheless take it upon themselves to pass judgement on mathematical questions and, improperly distorting some passage of Scripture for their purpose, dare find fault with my system and censure it, I disregard them even to the extent of despising their judgement as uninformed.'<sup>[24]</sup>

Introducing the analogy of the universe as a machine (*machina mundi*) Copernicus goes on to say that the followers of Ptolemy can have only a partial picture of the universe which is 'more like a monster than a man' because whilst the individual limbs are shaped beautifully they are without correspondence one with another. This refers to Ptolemy's scheme which required a separate diagram for the motion of each planet; Copernicus reduced this to a single diagram for the entire universe. This *gestalt* approach finds echoes in other innovators such as Alberti in architecture writing in about 1450, but published in 1485. Simplicity and order was the programme of the times in the explanatory sciences and creative arts, and

perhaps this assists in explaining how Renaissance Man could switch from one of C.P. Snow's cultures to another so readily.

With medieval resonances, but with his new system in mind Copernicus writes:

'Every observed change of place is caused by a motion of either the observed object or the observer or, of course, by an unequal displacement of each. For when things move with equal speed in the same direction, the motion is not perceived as between the observed object and the observer, I mean. It is the earth, however, from which the celestial ballet is beheld in its repeated performances before our own eyes.'<sup>[25]</sup>

It would take a longer essay than this to present the astronomy of Copernicus in any detail. Its main conclusions are well enough known, but there was much still to do in order to bring the system into a recognizably modern form. Most notably, Copernicus clung onto the Pythagorean idea of circles; and just as the adherents of Ptolemy's system had to do, he found it necessary to incorporate secondary motions of the planets to accord more closely with observation. Even so the orbit of Mars was not satisfactorily provided for and it was this feature that led Kepler to make the next jump in concept development. This was the idea that the orbits were elliptical and swept out equal areas in equal times. It was in compensating for ellipticity that both Ptolemy and Copernicus found the need to provide the 'wandering' planets with secondary motions based on non-fixed centres. There was still much to do, but Copernicus had made a fresh start.

But why Copernicus, and not someone else? Perhaps his particular circumstances were influential. In addition to a clear and inquisitive mind, allied with intellectual courage the facts of his religious convictions and cultural context were surely significant. He was of the Church but not in holy orders; he was a devout Catholic, some distance from Rome and surrounded by Protestants, many of whom he knew well enough to recognize fellow-feeling; he was extremely well-read and did not have to parade his obedience in public sermons. Had he been born and brought up in an entirely Catholic area, or had he been a Protestant in Protestant Germany, would he have made the same contribution to cosmology?

Bruce Marsden

## Notes

- 1 A.N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge, 1953), p15.
- 2 The names are not exclusive, but are merely indicative of a very few of the principal and relevant schools of thought of the times.

- 3 The O.E.D. gives ‘cosmos’ as ‘the world or universe as an ordered or harmonious system’ and is used in this sense here.
- 4 The words ‘Arabic’ and ‘Roman’ are used, where the context suggests, in a general sense to do with the respective empires; both of which incorporated many ethnic groups.
- 5 Only one full text of Aristarchus survives (*On the sizes and distances of the Sun and Moon*) but his heliocentric theory is known through Archimedes (*The Sand Reckoner*, published in print 1544 but known in manuscript from the thirteenth century).
- 6 Whilst the belief of Heraclides that the sun was the centre of the universe may have been based on a misreading of his texts this interpretation survived into the early Middle Ages and was reintroduced by Tycho Brahe in a variant form in the second half of the sixteenth century (O. Pedersen, *Early Physics and Astronomy*, revised edition [Cambridge, 1993], pp54-55).
- 7 Pedersen op.cit. p56.
- 8 S.H. Nasr, *Islamic Science* (World of Islam Festival Publishing Co Ltd, 1976), pp27–31. The journey in its many descriptions by poets and commentators may have been the source of inspiration for the *Divine Comedy* of Dante (footnote p31).
- 9 D. Hill, *Islamic Science and Engineering* (Edinburgh U.P. 1993), pp1–14.
- 10 E. Grant, *Planets, Stars, and Orbs: The Medieval Cosmos, 1200–1687* (Cambridge U.P., 1994), p13.
- 11 ‘Unresearched’ because interest in Arabic science in modern times arose only in the mid-20th century, when eastern Europe was more concerned with other matters. There is certainly evidence in vernacular architecture of cultural transmissions along these routes during the Middle Ages.
- 12 Dante, *Convito*, ii.6. Quoted by Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers* (Arkana edition, 1989 [1959]), p98.
- 13 K. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1974 [1963]), ch 4.
- 14 S.H. Nasr, *Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, revised edition (Thames & Hudson, London, 1978 [first Harvard 1964]), p185.
- 15 *Entia non multiplicanda praeter necessitem* – entities are not to be multiplied without necessity.
- 16 Important in terms of the *Primum Mobile*. William proposed the idea of ‘action at a distance’ without the intermediate medium playing any role, but ultimately discarded it as he could not envisage a physical effect without a direct causal connection. The influence of Aristotle was not simply dogmatic but his work was revered by scientists – despite shortcomings and in an imperfect world imperfectly understood.
- 17 Pedersen op.cit. p231.
- 18 Pope Paul III is considered to have been intelligent, humane, and scholarly. Copernicus felt secure in dedicating the book to him.

*[continued on page 51]*

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## A Scriptural Pilgrimage Through the Cotswolds

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The following meditation began with my thoughts about some of the more obvious Bible passages suggested by certain Cotswold place names. There seemed to emerge a progression from the initial stirrings of faith in an individual to the many New Testament passages which speak of our Lord's return in glory. However, in that progression, there is nothing unalterable about the order in which places are listed. Bishop's Cleeve could be inserted much earlier, but stands where it does only as a reminder that the possibility of reneging on our faith and commitment is an ever-present danger.

At first, there was no thought of submitting this as an article for publication. If I had any thought at all about a practical use for it, it was rather as an outline for a slideshow sequence with recorded commentary, or perhaps as an itinerary for a church outing. And perhaps that is the justification for publishing it here – we are all on the journey of life. Also, faith is an important element in that journey for many readers of this journal and, after all, Tyndale himself was born and grew up only just outside the Cotswolds.

*All quotations are from the KJV unless otherwise stated.*

### **1) BROADWAY**

**Matthew 7:13,14**

'Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereto: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

### **2) BROADWAY TOWER**

**Proverbs 18:10**

'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.'

### **3) EVENLODE–River and Village**

**Matthew 11:28-30; GNB**

'Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me; because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light.'

### **4) HAILES ABBEY**

Hailes Abbey was the third most significant place of pilgrimage in medieval England, after it acquired as a 'relic', a flask which purported to contain 'the true blood of Christ'.

**I Peter 1:18,19**

'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,

as silver and gold, received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.'

**5) WINDRUSH–River and Village**

**Acts 2:1,2; RSV**

'When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.'

**6) LOWER SLAUGHTER**

**Colossians 3:5,6; RSV**

'Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.'

**Romans 8:13,14; RSV**

'For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.'

**7) UPPER SLAUGHTER**

**Ephesians 6:11-13a; GNB**

'Put on all the armour that God gives you so you will be able to stand up against the Devil's evil tricks. For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age. So put on God's armour now!'

**8) PAINSWICK**

**I Peter 4:12,13; NIV**

'Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.'

**9) COLN ST ALDWYNS**

St Aldwyn who gave his name to this lovely Gloucestershire village, actually lived in Peartney, Lincolnshire where he was the Abbot in the early eighth century. The *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* states that his 'uncertain claim to sanctity is reflected in the absence of any clear feast day'. So St Aldwyn may remind us of many faithful saints of the past, who have little by way of earthly memorial, but who by their lives and faith declared that they desired:

**Hebrews 11:16**

'a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city'.

**10) BOURTON ON THE WATER, 'Cotswolds Venice'** **Psalm 46:4,5; GNB**

'There is a river that brings joy to the city of God, to the sacred house of the Most High. God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed; at early dawn He will come to its aid.'

*N.B. Slight liberties have been taken with the next two place-names!*

**11) TEMPLE GUITING-Temple Guiding**                   **Psalm 48:9,14; NIV**

‘Within your temple O God, we meditate on your unfailing love... For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even to the end.’

**Colossians 1:9-12; RSV**

‘We have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.’ *N.B. Temple Guiting parish church was owned by the Knights Templar during the 12th century-hence the name.*

**12) GUITING POWER-Fighting Power**   **Ephesians 6:10, 11 & 13b; GNB**

‘Finally, build up your strength in union with the Lord and by means of his mighty power. Put on all the armour that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the Devil’s evil tricks. Then when the evil day comes, you will be able to resist the enemy’s attacks; and after fighting to the end, you will still hold your ground.’

**Revelation 2:10**

To these faithful ones, the Lord who moves among the Candlesticks promises: ‘Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life’.

**13) BISHOP’S CLEEVE**                                   **I Peter 2:25**

‘For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.’

**14) CLEEVE CLOUD**                                   **Mark 13:26; NIV**

‘At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.’

**15) PAINSWICK BEACON**                                   **Revelation 21:3,4; RSV**

‘And I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” And he who sat upon the throne said “Behold, I make all things new.”’

*Graham E. Hall*

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## Post War Bible Translations: the Revised Standard Version and New Revised Standard Version

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The RSV (whole Bible 1952, with the Apocrypha 1956) and NRSV (1989) are different from the other translations covered so far in this series in that they have a ‘history’; they are direct descendants of Tyndale and AV. Just as the AV was, strictly, a revision rather than a new translation (taking its lineage from Tyndale and Coverdale, via the Great Bible and the Bishop’s Bible), so was the RSV a revision of the American Standard Version (1901) which in its turn was a revision of the AV via the Revised Version (1881 & 1885). This may explain why the RSV has found a place in so many hearts.

The preface ‘To the Reader’ of the NRSV restates much of the earlier Preface to the RSV. It explains the philosophy of both versions and the reasons why a new revision had been deemed necessary. It acknowledges their debt to the King James Version which has been termed ‘the noblest monument of English prose’, but shows how the continuing discoveries of older manuscripts and ongoing investigations into linguistic features of the text have prompted the proliferation of new translations into English. ‘Following the publication of the RSV Old Testament in 1952, significant advances were made in the discovery and interpretation of documents in Semitic languages related to Hebrew. In addition to the information that had become available in the late 1940s from the Dead Sea texts of Isaiah and Habakkuk, subsequent acquisitions from the same area brought to light many other early copies of all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures (except Esther), though most of these copies are fragmentary. During the same period early Greek manuscript copies of books of the New Testament also became available.’

The revision has, in the opinion of the committee, made use of the best texts available and the style of English adopted has continued in the tradition of the AV but always with regard to current English usage. The maxim ‘As literal as possible, as free as necessary’ was followed. ‘As a consequence, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) remains essentially a literal translation. Paraphrastic renderings have been adopted only sparingly, and then chiefly to compensate for a deficiency in the English language – the lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun’. The claim is that linguistic sexism has been avoided wherever possible. The consensus amongst the translators and theologians with whom

I have spoken with regard to this series is that the RSV/NRSV versions remain the most reliable for academic and scholarly study.

Luther A. Weigle, who chaired the American Standard Bible Committee, comments on the terseness of the style of the RSV, and notes that, though it was not an overt policy, the result has been the use of fewer words than the AV and certain contemporary translations.<sup>1</sup>

The NRSV has abandoned the *thee* and *thou* pronouns in prayers addressed to God. The preface points out that ‘in the original languages neither the Old Testament nor the New makes any linguistic distinction between addressing a human being and addressing the Deity.’ Readers will recall that whilst the NEB (1961, 1970) had retained the *thou* form in prayers addressing God, the REB (1989) abandoned it.

I give the RSV and NRSV renderings of passages already cited in previous articles for the purpose of comparison. I start with Jonah’s prayer:

**RSV:**

- 2 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying,  
‘I called to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me;  
out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and thou didst hear my voice.
- 3 For thou didst cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas,  
and the flood was round about me;  
all thy waves and thy billows passed over me.
- 4 Then I said, “I am cast out from thy presence;  
how shall I again look upon thy holy temple?”
- 5 The waters closed in over me the deep was round about me;  
weeds were wrapped about my head
- 6 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land  
whose bars closed upon me for ever;  
yet thou didst bring up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God.
- 7 When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord;  
and my prayer came to thee, into thy holy temple.
- 8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their true loyalty.
- 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to thee;  
what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!’
- 10 And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah  
upon the dry land.

**NRSV:**

- 2 Then Jonah prayed to the lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying  
'I called to the Lord out of my distress, and he answered me;  
out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.'
- 3 You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas,  
and the flood surrounded me;  
all your waves and your billows passed over me.
- 4 Then I said, "I am driven away from your sight;  
how shall I look again upon your holy temple?"
- 5 The waters closed in over me;  
the deep surrounded me;  
weeds were wrapped around my head
- 6 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land  
whose bars closed upon me forever;  
yet you brought up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God.
- 7 As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord;  
and my prayers came to you, into your holy temple.
- 8 Those who worship vain idols forsake their true loyalty.
- 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you;  
what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!'
- 10 Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out  
upon the dry land.

(I refer readers to volume 2 of the Journal for this passage according to Tyndale and AV, as well as NEB/REB).

The vexed question of phrases from the AV which have become part of our literary heritage is perhaps even more difficult in versions which claim to maintain the AV tradition. The RSV retains, for instance, the 'still small voice' of 1 Kings 19,12, whilst readers will hold differing opinions on the NRSV's 'sound of sheer silence' (surely preferable to REB's 'faint murmuring sound').

The lovely cadences of Tyndale/AV's translation of the opening verses of John's Gospel have been preserved in RSV and I do not feel that they have been well served by NRSV's revision:

**John 1ff:**

**RSV:**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; and all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**NRSV:**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Whilst RSV virtually retains Tyndale/AV in Genesis 1ff., NRSV takes into account a different world view and achieves a felicitous rendering of the opening words of the Bible.

**RSV:**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

And God said, ‘Let there be light’: and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

**NRSV:**

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let

'there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the water, and let it separate the waters from the waters'. So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

Bruce Metzger restates the words of the RSV Preface in that to the NRSV: 'This new version seeks to preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the years. It is intended for use in public reading and congregational worship, as well as in private study, instruction, and meditation. We have resisted the temptation to introduce terms and phrases that merely reflect current moods, and have tried to put the message of the Scriptures in simple, enduring words and expressions that are worthy to stand in the great tradition of the King James Bible and its predecessors.'

Here are the opening verses of Hebrews for comparison with versions previously quoted.

RSV:

In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs.

NRSV:

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty

on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

In our pluralist, essentially secular, society where marketing and targeting are the order of the day, Bible translators have identified their intended readers and their probable ‘reading age’, and individual translations are intended to appeal to different readers. Whilst some have hoped that RSV/NRSV might become the ‘common’ English Bible, it seems unlikely that there will ever again be one, even unofficially authorized, version that has a place equivalent to that of the King James Version. The more ‘literary’ style of the NRSV, which will appeal to many, may prove a barrier to others. Consider for example the stately language of Romans 8.18ff with the eager immediacy of Phillips’ wording (quoted in Volume 3 of this Journal):

NRSV:

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.



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Genesis 1: *The Creation*,  
Holbein (1497–1543)

As the NRSV preface says: 'The Old Testament sets forth the call of a special people to enter into covenant relation with the God of justice and steadfast love and to bring God's law to the nations. The New Testament records the life and work of Jesus Christ, the one in whom "the Word became flesh" as well as describes the rise and spread of the early Christian Church. The Bible carries its full message, not to those who regard it simply as a noble literary heritage of the past or who wish to use it to enhance political purposes and advance otherwise desirable goals, but to all persons and communities who read it so that they may discern and understand what God is saying to them'. If the very range and variety of translations furthers that end then that must be beneficial. To quote the Preface of the King James Bible (1611): 'For is the kingdome of God become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when wee may use another no lesse fit, as commodiously?'

*Dr. Hilary Day*

#### Notes

- 1 *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*  
(The International Council of Religious Education, 1946), pp.56–57.

— N E W   B O O K —

### *William Tyndale on Priests and Preachers: with New Light on his Early Career*

by ANDREW J BROWN

*Tyndale's views on Christian ministry, with new information  
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Some anthologies, some translations for that matter, seek to close things down. Their ambition is to be definitive and magisterial, to fix a cultural process or moment for the reader. Donald Davie's *The Psalms in English* (Penguin 1996), published after the editor's death the previous autumn, has quite other aims. True, it is supported by Davie's scholarship, wit, intelligence and seniority as an historian-critic of English (especially Protestant Christian) poetry. But this book goads, infuriates, surprises, informs. It has a Poundian pedagogy which seeks to shatter *idées reçues*. There is here little comfortable donnishness, and no comfort at all for the cultural conventions of our time. Fundamentalist and liberal alike may find it at moments distressing. Instead of lulling the reader into that sense of official inevitability that things are so, Davie's introduction, selection and commentary ask us to rethink:

- a) the history and importance of translation within English culture since 1500 and in particular its place in English poetry
- b) what a psalm is and what it might be for
- c) what English poets we have impoverished ourselves by neglecting (very Poundian, this) and
- d) given the twin nature of psalms as performed (said and sung) scriptures and as poetry, what are the resources of late twentieth century English for Englishing them?

The view of translation as a low activity which can plead literal accuracy as its only virtue is relatively new. Davie blames 'the romantic assumption that the translation of ancient texts was a task too servile for the true poet to stoop to'.<sup>[1]</sup> If in Romanticism Davie includes the nineteenth century philological notion of 'classics' which supplanted the older tradition of the educated Greek and Latin reader, then I agree with him. The idea of originality combined with that of professional specialism, drove many translator poets from the field. This was also the case with texts originally written in the third learned language, Hebrew, especially with the psalms. From 1500 until the birth of Romanticism nearly every poet tried his hand at them. As Davie's anthology shows, the excellent verse versions of eighteenth century poets such as Isaac Watts, Christopher Smart and Charles Wesley grew out of live engagement with texts and a notion that

infinite readings of Holy Scripture were both possible and desirable. In turn these translators inherited a tradition which began in Tudor times.

While not slighting the criterion of accuracy, Davie asks us to read a translated psalm as a poem, as speaking art rather than its pale shadow the crib or its pallid surrogate, devotional writing. This is true whether we are reading the remarkable Countess of Pembroke (1561–1621) or the daring and at times brazenly colloquial Gordon Jackson (b. 1938). Compare, for example:

Not us, I say, not us, but thine own name respect, eternal Lord  
And make it glorious to show thy mercy and confirm thy word.

(Ps. 115, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke,  
*Psalms in English*, p.73),

with:

Not ours, Lord, no not ours, the glory is yours alone  
The honours belong to your name for keeping faith with us  
For your love that never wearies.

(Gordon Jackson,  
*Psalms in English*, p.369)

Here by plainness of diction each poet immediately achieves a tone of genuine humility, of facing the God-man relationship as the Psalmist conceives of it. By contrast, Kipling in his version of part of Psalm 115 (*Psalms in English*, p.298) incorporates the first line of the Latin version of the psalm, *Non Nobis Domine*. This invokes the music of national ritual and reminds the English reader of the glories of Agincourt (see *Henry V* Act IV scene 8). Kipling achieves a sonorous, stately effect, and ceremonious image of the great bowing before the Greatest which can also be read out of the text. These three examples illustrate the versatility of an individual psalm and the variety of this anthology. Again and again the book demonstrates the power and range of available versions and translations.

In his ‘Introduction’ Davie reminds us, in case felicitous translating should make us forget, of the otherness, the foreignness of psalms, as well as of the various theories about their original contexts and uses. In denying Richard Hooker’s claim for the Psalter Davie goes too far for this reader, for it is out of the authenticity of human emotion, sometimes under an extreme stress too familiar to our century, that some psalms speak:

happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth  
thy little ones against the stones

(Psalm 137 v. 9 A.V.)

This comes from experience of what we now call ethnic cleansing or pogrom or, simply, atrocity. Someone has seen this happen to his own children. Such pain, such anger cannot be erased by easy piety. When Hooker wrote:

‘What is the necessary for man to know  
which the psalms are not able to teach?’

he was surely considering the Psalter as a whole, whether or not he knew that it had been put together from divers sources over many centuries. All human life (or Israelite life, anyway) is surely there, from the erotic (Psalm 45; see Davie’s note, p.48 on Golding’s version), to the despairing (Psalm 22, espec.vv. 1,2,14 and 15), to the assured (Pss. 23 and 24), to the satirical (see Psalm 53, especially in Jackson’s translation, *Psalms in English*, p.348), to the confessional (Psalm 51, especially Coverdale in the B.C.P.), to the communally triumphant and praiseful (Pss. 24 and 150). Davie’s choice of translators is similarly wide and inclusive and he is aware of the various uses psalms are put to now, which include silent reading, public reading as part of Scripture, corporate reading aloud, and singing to Anglican chant. Here his insights are especially useful as he distinguishes between psalm as lyric poem, as metrical hymn, and as read or heard poem. The distinction between sung and spoken/read he finds particularly relevant to twentieth century versions, where translations meant to be sung (Frost’s in the A.S.B.) differ sharply from those to be read or heard (Jackson, Wilmer and Davie himself). Davie rightly spots a cultural fault-line here between Biblical scholars and theologians, to whom he refers as ‘Hebraists’ and to whom he attributes a philistine if not sinister influence, and twentieth century poets. In general the former seem oblivious of the fact that the Hebrew texts are *literature*, the latter for the most part quite uninterested in Judaeo-Christian writing. Davie provides excellent exceptions among the latter. David L Frost, is conservative and sometimes ‘literary’ in a bad sense for example:

‘O praise the Lord, and O sing to the Lord a new song’  
where neither the ‘O’ nor the word order to the second clause (‘sing a new song to the Lord’ would surely be better) seem so much twentieth century as ‘prayerbookese’, an idiom unknown to Coverdale. Nevertheless Frost’s versions can be sung and are capable of sudden surprises, such as the bitter sarcasm Davie cites:

They shall be cast down  
by that Mighty One who is their judge:  
and how pleasing shall my words be to them then!

(Psalm 141, v. 7 *Psalms in English* p.326)

All the same Frost usually seems to be nearer to the colourless crib than to the imaginative transference that is true translation. By contrast, Jackson and Davie himself are sharply idiomatic, getting across the argumentative tone found in many a psalm. Here is part of Davie's adaptation of Psalm 39, included in the anthology at Jackson's insistence:

I said to myself: 'That's enough. Your lifestyle is no model.

Keep quiet about it, and while you're about it, be less overt.'

(*Psalms in English*, p.329)

This illustrates what one translator has learnt from another; here Davie's master is Ezra Pound, the Pound who in turn learned from Villon and Laforgue as well as from Browning, and who wrote *Further Instructions* and *The Lake Isle*. Pound the (reluctant?) echoer of Hebrew poetry is also anthologized by Davie, who in his notes to these items for *The Cantos* shows himself as usual the careful literary detective.

However, as Michael Alexander has pointed out<sup>[2]</sup>, this book does contain solecisms, though I take the 'Wayfarer' of 'Introduction' to be a proof-reader's mistake for 'Sea-farer' which Davie's death prevented him spotting. Also the mistake may well be Frost's since Davie is quoting him at the time. Again Davie does not include any material from newer translations of the Bible as a whole. The 'Hebraists' are not always that damaging. For example, this, from *The Jerusalem Bible* (orig 1967), seems to me at least as good as Frost's in the A.S.B.:

Look after me, God, I take shelter in you.

To Yahweh you say, 'My Lord you are my fortune, nothing else but you'

and what about:

Why stand far off, Lord?

Why hide away in times of trouble?

Psalm 10 v1 Revised English Bible (1989)

Admittedly these translations often lapse after a verse or two, but since Davie deliberately includes examples of the thoroughly bad from earlier centuries for comparative purposes (see for example, Oldham's *Paraphrase upon the 137<sup>th</sup> Psalm*, pp. 163–167), would not some critical sampling and exegesis of versions much used now be useful?

Aware though Davie is of the historical and contemporary centrality of music to and in the psalms, I think that he is wrong about it. He quotes W.H. Auden:

... Since music, generally speaking can express only one thing at a time, it is ill adapted to verses which expressed mixed or ambiguous feelings ... (p.lii)

I simply do not find this to be so, except possibly in the more flat-footed hymn tunes to which some metrical psalms are sung. Neither Anglican chant nor the better hymn tunes are an excuse for banal translating, and while sung lyric may demand a simpler clearer line, this does not remove the possibility of complexity for a skilled poet-translator.

In conclusion this anthology is an act of criticism – Davie's last, as it happens. It has expanded my sense of English poetry – the Countess of Pembroke and the obscure Michael Cosowarth are alike major discoveries for me – and opened up discussion of translation, the functions of Hebrew writing in the modern world and the state of English literary culture. It is honest, pugnacious, moving and informative by turns. And it brings to a wider audience contemporary translators who are important poets in their own right, in particular Clive Wilmer, Gordon Jackson and Donald Davie himself. Essentially this book is rooted in the Reformation. Implicitly it judges other writing by the standards and assumptions of Tyndale, Coverdale, and their eighteenth century evangelical heirs. It makes theology and faith live factors in criticism; and it demands both faith and strenuous thinking from the faithful and the unbelieving alike.

J.C. Davies

## References

- 1 Donald Davie, ed. *The Psalms in English* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin Books 1006, p.xxiii. All references in the text are to this edition.
- 2 Michael Alexander, 'New Penguin Classics' *Agenda*, Vol.34, No. 1 183-184.

## CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHS

Copies of photographs taken at the 1996 Oxford Tyndale Conference can be obtained from Chris Daliell, 54 St Paul's Terrace, York YO2 4BJ.

The price of £2.50 each includes postage  
and a donation to the Tyndale Society.

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## George Marsh of Chester

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### A declaration of the examination and burning of George Marsh at Westchester the 24th day of April [1555]

George Marsh was born in the parish of Deane in the county of Lancaster, and was well brought up in learning and honest trade of living by his parents. Who afterwards, about the twenty-fifth year of his age, took to wife an honest maiden, having children between them lawfully begotten. And then God taking his wife out of this world, he being most desirous of godly studies (leaving his household and children in good order) went unto the university of Cambridge, where he studied and much increased in learning, and was a minister of God's word. In which estate he used himself accordingly, earnestly setting forth God's true religion in the parish of Deane and elsewhere in Lancashire. And in the time of Queen Mary he most faithfully acknowledged the same. Whereupon he was apprehended and kept in close prison by George Cotes, then Bishop of Chester, within his straight prison in Chester within the precinct of the Bishop's house about the space of four months, not permitting him to have relief and comfort of his friends but giving charge unto the porter to mark who they were that asked for him, and to signify their names unto him the said Bishop.

Within a few days of his coming to Chester, the Bishop sent for him into his hall, nobody being present but they twain. And then he asked him certain questions concerning the sacrament, who made such answers as wherewith the Bishop seemed to be content, saying that he utterly denied transubstantiation, neither yet allowed the abuse of the Mass, nor that the lay people should receive under one kind only contrary to Christ's institution. Which points the Bishop went about to persuade him, howbeit all in vain. Much other talk he had with him to submit himself to the universal church of Rome, and when he saw he could not prevail he sent him to prison again.

And after being there, there came to him into the prison diverse times one Massey a fatherly old man, one Wrench the schoolmaster, one Henham the Bishop's Chaplain, and the Archdeacon with many more, who with all probability of words and philosophy, but not after Christ, went about to persuade him to submit himself to the church of Rome, to acknowledge the Pope to be head thereof, and to interpret the scriptures none other wise than

the church did, with many such like arguments and persuasions. To whom the said George Marsh answered that he did acknowledge and believe one church and shall confess and believe in one God and in one Messiah, and in Him only trust for salvation, and not upon the Romish laws and decrees [or] the Bishop of Rome being the supreme head. And where they said the church did stand and so had continued by the space of fifteen hundred years and more, he made answer that the church, which is the body of Christ, was before any Romish decrees, neither had any supremacy over empires and kingdoms, but was a little, poor, silly flock, dispersed and scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd in the midst of wolves, or as orphans or fatherless children. And that this church was led and ruled by Christ, He being the Supreme Head of this Church, defending her from all assaults, errors, troubles and persecutions wherewith she is ever compassed about!

He shewed and proved unto them also by the Flood of Noah, the destruction of Sodom, the Israelites departing out of Egypt, by the parables of the Sower, of the king's son's marriage, of the great supper and by other plain sentences of scripture that this church was of none estimation and little in comparison of the church of hypocrites and wicked worldlings.

He was thrust at with all violence of craft and subtlety, but yet the Lord upheld him and delivered him, which suffereth us not to be tempted above our might, but in the midst of our troubles strengtheneth us and giveth us a mouth and wisdom how and what to speak.

Now after that the said Bishop had taken his pleasure in punishing this his prisoner, and often reviling him, giving taunts and odious names of heretic, he caused him to be brought forth into a chapel in the Cathedral Church of Chester, called Our Lady Chapel. Before him [was] the said Bishop (at two of the clock in the afternoon), who was there placed in a chair for that purpose. And Dutton, Mayor of the said city, and other priests assisting him sat directly over against the said Bishop. And then they caused the said George Marsh to take an oath upon a book to answer truly unto such articles as should be objected against him. Upon which oath taken, the Chancellor laid unto his charge that he had preached and openly published most blasphemously within the parishes of Deane, Eccles, Bolton, Bury and many other parishes within the Bishop's diocese, directly against the Pope's authority, the blessed Mass, the sacrament of the altar and many other articles. Unto all which he answered that he neither heretically nor blasphemously preached or spake against any of the said articles, but simply and truly as occasion served maintained the truth as touching the said

articles. And as, said he, all you now present did acknowledge in the time of the late King Edward the Sixth!

Then they examined him severally of every article, and had him answer directly yea or nay, without circumstance. For they were come to examine and not to dispute at that present. Then he answered them unto every article most modestly, according to the doctrine by public authority taught in this realm at the death of the said King Edward. Whose answers were every one noted and written by the Registrar to the uttermost that could work against him (which cannot at this present be forgotten). After this, the company for that time brake up, and he was returned to his prison again.

Within three weeks after this, or thereabouts, in the said chapel and in like sort as before, the said Bishop and others there assembled, the said George Marsh was brought by his keeper and others with bills and diverse weapons before them. Where first the said Chancellor, by way of oration, declared unto the people present the said Bishop's charge and burning charity, who, even as a good shepherd doth see to his flock that none of his sheep have the scab or other disease for infecting other clean sheep, but will save and cure the said scabbed sheep, so his lordship had sent for the said George Marsh there present as a scabbed sheep, and had weeded him out for corrupting others, and had done what he could in shewing most charitably his charitable disposition towards the said Marsh, to bring him from his naughty heresies. But all that he could do would not help, so that he was now determined if the said Marsh would not relent and abjure, to pronounce and give sentence definitive against him. Wherefore he bade the said George Marsh be now well advised what he would do, for he stood upon his life. And if he would not at that present forsake his heretical opinions, it would be after the sentence given too late, though he would never so gladly desire it!

And then the said Chancellor asked him whether he were not one of the Bishop's diocese. To the which he answered that he knew not how large his diocese was, for his continuance was at Cambridge! But then they replied and asked whether he had not lately been at Deane parish in Lancashire, and there abode. And he answered yes. Then the Chancellor read all his former answers that he made in that place at his former examination. And at every one he asked him whether he would stick to the same or no. To the which he answered again: Yea!

How say you then to this (quoth the Chancellor)? In your last examination, amongst many other damnable and schismatical heresies, you said that the church and doctrine set forth in King Edward's time, was the true church, and that the Church of Rome is not the true and Catholic Church!

I said so indeed, quoth Marsh, and I believe it to be true.

Here also others took occasion to ask him (for that he denied the Bishop of Rome's authority in England) whether Linus, Anacletus and Clement, that were Bishops of Rome, were not good men. And he answered: Yea, and diverse others! But (said he) they claimed no more authority in England than the Bishop of Canterbury doth at Rome. And I strive not, quoth he, against the person of the Bishop, but against his doctrine which in most points is repugnant to the doctrine of Christ!

Thou art an arrogant fellow indeed then! said the Bishop. In what article is the Church of Rome repugnant to the doctrine of Christ?

To whom George Marsh answered and said: Oh my lords, I pray you judge not so of me. I stand now upon the point of my life and death. And a man in my case hath no cause to be arrogant. Neither am I. And as concerning the disagreement of the doctrine, among many other things the Church of Rome erreth in the sacrament. For where Christ in the institution thereof did as well deliver the cup as the bread, saying, Drink ye all of this, Mark reporteth that they did drink of it! In like manner Saint Paul delivered it unto the Corinthians. And in the same sort also was it used in the primitive church by the space of many hundred years. [But] now the Church of Rome doth take away one part of the sacrament from the laity. Wherefore, if I could be persuaded in my conscience by God's word that it were well done, I could gladly yield in this point!

Then said the Bishop: There is no disputing with an heretic!

And therefore when all his answers were read, he asked him whether he would stand to the same, being as they were full of heresy, or else forsake them and come unto the Catholic Church. To whom he made this full answer and said that he held no heretical opinion, but utterly abhorred all kinds of heresy, although they most untruly so did slander him. And he desired all the people present to bear him witness that to all articles of religion he held none other opinion than was by law established and publicly taught in England at the death of King Edward the Sixth. And in the same pure religion and doctrine he would stand, live and die!

And here the Chancellor spake to one Leach which stood near unto Marsh, and bade [him] stand further from him, for his presence did him no good. This being done, the Bishop took out a writing out of his bosom and began to read the sentence of condemnation. But when the Bishop had read almost half thereof, the Chancellor called to him and said: Good my lord, stay! For if ye proceed any further it will be too late to call it again! - and so the Bishop stayed. Then his Popish priests and many other of the ignorant

people called upon Marsh with many earnest words to recant. And amongst other, one Pullen a shoemaker said to him: For shame, man! Remember thyself and recant! - they bade him kneel down and pray, and they all would pray for him. So they kneeled down, and he desired them to pray for him, and he would pray for them!

The Bishop then asked him again whether he would not have the Queen's mercy in time. And he answered [that] he did gladly desire the same, and did love Her Grace as faithfully as any of them. But yet he durst not deny his Saviour Christ. Then the Bishop put his spectacles again upon his nose, and read forward his sentence about five or six lines. And there again the Chancellor, with a smiling countenance, called to the Bishop and said: Yet, good my lord, once again stay. For if that word be spoken, all is past. No relenting will then serve!

And the Bishop (pulling off his spectacles) said: I would stay if it would be! How sayest thou (quoth he)? Wilt thou recant?

Many of the priests and ignorant people bade him so do and call to God for grace. And one pulled him by the sleeve and bade him recant and save his life, to whom he answered: I would as fain live as you if in so I doing I should not deny my Master Christ!

So the Bishop read out his sentence unto the end, and straight after said unto him: Now will I no more pray for thee than I will for a dog!

And Marsh answered that notwithstanding he would pray for his lordship!

After this the Bishop delivered him unto the Sheriffs of the city (then his late keeper bade him: Fare well, good George! - with weeping), which caused the officers to carry him to a prison at the Northgate where he was very straightly kept until the time he went to his death. During which time he had small comfort or relief of any worldly creature, for being in the dungeon none that willed him good could speak with him, or at least durst enterprise so to do for fear of accusation. And some of the citizens which loved him in God for the gospel's sake (whereof there were but a few), although they were never acquainted with him, would sometimes in the evening (at a hole upon the wall that went into the said prison) call to him and ask him how he did. He would answer them most cheerfully that he did well, and thanked God most highly that He would vouchsafe of His mercy to appoint him to be witness unto His truth and to suffer for the same. Once or twice he had money cast him in at the same hole, about ten pence at one time, and two shillings at another time, for which he gave God thanks and used the same to his necessity.

When the time and day appointed came that he should suffer, the Sheriffs of the city (whose names were Amery and Cooper), with their officers and a great number of poor simple barbers with rusty bills and poleaxes, went to the Northgate and there took out the said George Marsh, who came with them most humbly and meekly with a lock upon his feet. And as he came upon the way towards the place of execution, some folk proffered him some money, and looked that he should have gone with a little purse in his hand, as the manner of felons was accustomed in the city in times past at their going to execution, to the end to gather money to give unto a priest to say Masses for them after their death, whereby they might (as they thought) be saved. But Marsh said he would not as then be troubled with meddling with money, but willed some good man to take the money if the people were disposed to give any, and to give it unto the prisoners or poor people. So he went all the way unto his death with his book in his hand, looking upon the same, and many of the people said [that] this man goeth not unto his death as a thief, or as one that 'deserved to die.

Now when he came to the place of execution without the city near unto Spittle Boughton, one Sawtrey, being the Deputy Chamberlain of Chester, shewed Marsh a writing under a great seal, saying that it was a pardon for him if he would recant. Whereat Marsh answered that he would gladly accept the same, and said further that he loved the Queen. But forasmuch as it tended to pluck him from God he could not receive it. After that, he began to speak to the people shewing the cause of his death, and would have exhorted them to stick unto Christ. Whereupon one of the Sheriffs said: George Marsh, we must have no sermoning now! - to whom he said: Master. I cry you mercy! - and so kneeling down made his prayers, and then put off his clothes unto his shirt, and then was chained unto the post having a number of faggots under him and a thing made like a firkin with pitch and tar in the same over his head. And by reason that the fire was unskilfully made, and that the wind did drive the flame to and fro, he suffered great extremity in his death, which notwithstanding he abode very patiently. Upon this, many of the people said he was a martyr and died godly. Which thing caused the Bishop shortly after to make a sermon in the Cathedral Church, and therein affirmed that Marsh was an heretic, burnt like an heretic, and was a firebrand in hell!

In recompence of this his good and charitable sermon, within short time after the just judgment of God appeared upon the said Bishop, who through his wicked and adulterous behaviour was (most shamefully it is to be spoken) burned with a harlot and died thereof, as credible report hath been

made. For even they which did speak best of him in this case, confessed that he had a hole or sore in the secret and privy parts of his belly. And when some of the Bishop's secret friends (whereof two were aldermen of Chester that had seen the dead body) were gathered together and minding to deface or discredit the rumour that then was upon him, declared the manner of his disease and wound. Whereat one Brassey being then Coroner (and no heretic!) said with an oath that then surely the Bishop was burnt. For he before that time had taken the view of a mariner which died upon the like disease, and in every case had evident sores and tokens as the Bishop had. More particularly might be said touching the last tragedy of this Bishop and his whorehunting. But shamefastness calleth back.

Edited out of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563) by Bill Cooper



The establishment of the true church. Woodcut from the second edition of John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, (1570). At the top, images are salvaged by Catholics whilst at the bottom left the new church is shown as a simple temple, with worshippers gathered round the pulpit. British Library.

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## Tyndale and Adeline

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Tucked away at the bottom of the steep valley side of the Vale of Berkeley stands the small village of Little Sodbury, and in the village stands the Victorian church of St Adeline. It is a remarkable church for its associations rather than its architecture. In 1859 the original church, which stood behind the manor of Little Sodbury, was demolished and the new Victorian church was proudly built at the bottom of the slope. The original, a tiny church of which just two small portions of ivy covered walls remain, stands behind the manor of Little Sodbury half way up the hill. Although the manor is now privately owned and the original church can only be seen by permission, it is the manor which is the key to the interest of the church, for it was there that William Tyndale taught the children of Sir John Walsh.

What the original church was like in architecture and interior decoration can only be guessed at, but no doubt it had many of the elements that Tyndale was later to argue against. The east end probably had an elaborate altar, and the church may have had wall paintings, relics, statues and a rood screen. The rood screen was often a large wooden structure with a cross on top ('rood' is the Old English word for a cross). The screen separated the chancel – where the priest celebrated the Mass – from the congregation who watched.

Reputedly only one part of the church remains intact: the pulpit. It is of a simple design, being octagonal in shape, but if it did come from the original church it may well have been the pulpit from which Tyndale preached.

The history of the original church is obscure, but it had one unique feature in England: it was, and is, the only church to be dedicated to St Adeline. St Adeline is an obscure saint and does not appear in any of the standard works. Only when a full list of saints' dedications in England is studied is it revealed that she was a 'Virgin' and that her feast day is Oct 20<sup>th</sup>. Who she was is open to debate. Various options are given by Basil Cottle in his 'Presidential Address' in the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* (106, 1988). The only firm evidence is her name, but complications arise as her present name might well be a corruption of:

- St Adela – who was the daughter of King Dagobert II, and much honoured in Belgium
- Adelina Joculatrix – the comedienne, who flourished in 1066
- Adelina – Abbess of Poulangy in Normandy and niece of St Bernard.

It is possible that her name was originally the male saint's name St Athelwine, but has become so corrupted that even the name has changed sex.

The most interesting option is that the name derives from the Abbess of Normandy for this would show a strong Gloucestershire/Normandy connection, possibly through the trading port of Bristol.

It is unfortunate that that is as far as we can get with the name; a name that Tyndale would have known so well, and in the church he would have undoubtedly preached in. It is quite possible that more information lurks deep in the archives of various record offices and the dedication may have had a significance or origin with the original owners of the manor house, as the church was undoubtedly built as a lord's private church, and only later developed into a parish church.

*Chris Daniell  
York*

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#### **Notes (B. Marsden), continued from page 28**

- 19 Ed B. Bienkowska, *The Scientific World of Copernicus* (D. Reidel Dordrecht and Boston, 1973). Essay by J Dobrzycki, *Nicolaus Copernicus – His Life and Work*, p20.
- 20 Otherwise, Frauenburg, close to Gdansk on the Baltic; now in Poland but at that time in Ermland once part of the Duchy of Prussia.
- 21 Deduced from the *Revolutions* edited by Dobrzki (op.cit. Part I) introduction p xviii; Bienkowska, op.cit. pp25–28; and A. Armitage, *The World of Copernicus*, (London 1972, reprinted 1978) p109.
- 22 Usually referred to in the literature of science as a 'local Lutheran clergyman'.
- 23 The name of the author was discovered and revealed by Kepler in 1609, but incorporated into later editions of the *Revolutions* only after the Warsaw edition of 1854. Koestler's alternative assertion is unconvincing, op.cit. pp169–175.
- 24 Final passage of the *Letter of Dedication*.
- 25 The *Revolutions*, op.cit (Part I), ch 5.

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## Obituary

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### **Major Charles Henry Guise Tyndale, 1918–1996**

Born on 7th April 1918, Henry Tyndale was the son of Henry Edmund Guise Tyndale, Housemaster of Kay House, Winchester College, and Katherine, née Seely.

He was educated at Marlborough College and Sandhurst after which he was commissioned into the Indian Army.

He served in North Africa during WW2 before being captured and incarcerated in Italy and Germany prior to release in 1945. He became an accomplished cartographer for the escape committees in his various camps as well as being a leading light in Camp Dramatics!

After the war he was instrumental in maintaining peaceful relations in his sector at the very difficult time of partition in India. He later served in Trieste, Korea and Malaya before retiring from the Army in 1960.

He took a post as a company executive in London and assisted his second wife Mary with the Girl Guides.

After retirement from business he kept up part-time work in manufacturing and Trust House Forte while gradually devoting more time to raising money for MENCAP and 'The Grange School' for Mentally Handicapped Children. His efforts over 27 years were richly rewarded at his Memorial Service when it was announced that a new school for the handicapped is to be named in his memory.

He bore the tragedy of the deaths of two wives and two children with characteristic courage and fortitude.

He was a man of enormous integrity, a kind and considerate gentleman who was loved by everyone, a person who accepted all and loved them in return.

It is a great shame that his burgeoning interest in The Tyndale Society was not able to be fulfilled.

*Antony Tyndale*

### JOHN FRITH

I am in touch with a PhD candidate in the USA currently writing his dissertation on John Frith (1503–1533) who was a close associate and co-resident of William Tyndale in Antwerp during the late 1520s and early 1530s.

Are there any indications of his movements to or from Marburg around the time of the famous Marburg Colloquy of 1529?

If the research goes well, my contact also hopes to get a biography of him published as 'He is often neglected and overlooked in the light of his more famous friend.'

If you are able to help, please contact:

The Reverend Canon Dirk W van Leeuwen  
St Bonifaces's, Grétrystraat 39  
2018 Antwerp, Belgium

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I am assembling material for a book, a section of which will cover late medieval cooking in all its various aspects in manor house, manse and hut.

As part of this project it will be helpful to know if there exists some estimate of literacy levels among the differing social structures of the time.

I believe the Church would have had a monopoly of learning and therefore literacy during the period, crucially from 1600 to 1850. Any information that would provide guidance on the subject would be greatly appreciated.

In the meantime if you have any thoughts or other possible sources, they would be most welcome.

Thank you for your help

*Geoffrey M. Hill*

39 New Road, London N8 8TA

Tel: 0181-341 5359

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Out of the shepherd shires of the north,  
Teesdale, Tynedale, Coverdale,  
the carded word of the Lord.

*(Wycliffe is a village on the south bank of the Tees)*

*Gordon Jackson*

Professor Noda, from Japan, who attended both the 1994 and 1996 Tyndale Conferences, bought a video of *God's Outlaw* for her students. However, the students do not know English well enough to be able to grasp the intricacies of the plot. Professor Noda would therefore like a 'scenario' of the video, or alternatively a copy of the book itself. Can anyone help her with this request? If so, please reply direct to:

Professor M. Noda

1-6-14 Sakuragaoka, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo 156, Japan

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**APOLOGIES** are due to Gregory Morris of St Andrews University for the terse attribution of his excellent article on *Tyndale and the Song of Songs* merely to 'Morris'. Some printing errors in the notes to the article also slipped through the net. The vagaries of computer software resulted in the letter 'o' being replaced by '\_'.  

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#### **A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

A suggestion has been made that the Society should have available a slide lecture on Tyndale, so that members wishing to give a lecture locally could borrow from the Secretary a set of slides and a full typewritten script. The idea is a good one. Is anyone willing to prepare such a lecture? Several people might like to cooperate. Help would be available in assembling the slides. Please write to Priscilla Frost.

*David Daniell*

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#### **SOCIETY NOTES**

##### **25 October**

Third Hertford Lecture, Oxford. Speaker: Sir Anthony Kenny

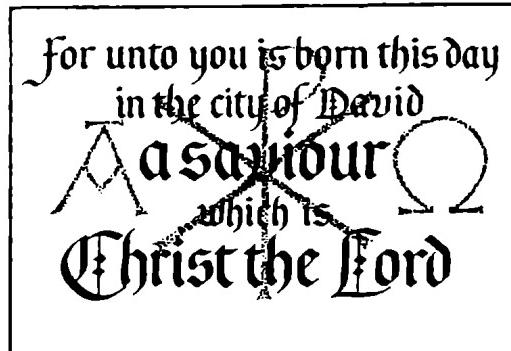
##### **Communication and the European Experience**

A second meeting in Belgium, with communications as its starting point, organized by Dr Guido Latré of the Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven:

**29 Nov-1 Dec: European  
Communications Today and  
Tomorrow.**

##### **Greetings Cards**

Society greetings cards cost 50p each (including envelope) and include the following design. For samples, contact The Secretary.



# 1996-97 AMERICAN TOUR of the British Library's *Tyndale 'Let There Be Light'* EXHIBITION

## CALIFORNIA, November 1996

- North American Tyndalians will be interested to know that this exhibition, which in London between September 1994 and February 1995 received over 42,000 visitors, opens in The Huntington Library, San Marino, California, on 19th November 1996. A large number of visitors are expected.
- The opening will include special lectures by Professor David Daniell, who will also lecture in the area, including in San Diego, between 16th and 27th November. (At the time of going to press, Professor Daniell is still able to accept two more invitations to speak in the Los Angeles area, before his return to the UK on 27th November.)

## CALIFORNIA, January 1997

- Professor Daniell will take part in a Tyndale Symposium at The Huntington Library on 11th January 1997, and can accept invitations to speak, and meet those interested, around that date.

## NEW YORK, February-May 1997

- From California, the exhibition goes to New York Public Library, where it opens on 22nd February. It remains in New York until 17th May 1997. Again, Profesor Daniell will give special lectures, and welcomes invitations for mid-February to spread the news of the Tyndale Society.

## WASHINGTON, June-September 1997

- The exhibition finally moves to the Library of Congress, Washington DC, from 4th June to 6th September 1997 (dates to be confirmed). Professor Daniell will be lecturing in the area around the middle of June.

